



point
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■ APRIL 2004

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TV actor Will works with Toc H

New members bring wealth of experience

Picture special at Archbishop Michael Ramsey College

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The magazine of



TOC H

Volunteer wanted for sunshine chat

A man who has received awards for his work in producing audio tapes for blind, handicapped and elderly people wants Toc H members to volunteer to be interviewed for a Sunshine Radio hospital programme in Weston-super-Mare.

H Sydney Cox, himself a proud member of Toc H Milton branch at Weston-super-Mare, has been producing his tapes since 1987 and from an initial nine recipients, by 2000 they were being sent to 1,077 people. Last year the estimated audience was 2,762 and, not being someone to rest on his laurels, he's now set himself a new target of 4,000 for his three-hour entertainment tapes.

Last year Sydney, who lives in Highbridge, Somerset, received a commendation from the Beacon Fellowship which recognises individuals who have made exceptional contributions to charitable

causes and this led to him becoming a presenter on Sunshine Radio.

He will provide three hours of live entertainment for hospital patients on most Fridays and he wants to include an interview with a fellow Toc H member. He says: "I am hopeful that there may be someone conveniently near who could be at the studio a little before 7pm on a Friday. Who knows, perhaps it will bring about more members for Toc H."

Sydney also received a Blue Peter award in 1996, acknowledging his work for the blind and in 2002 received a Golden Jubilee Commemorative Award from Somerset County Council and a second award from the national charity, the Dark Horse Venture.

He says: "When Sunshine Radio interviewed me it 'leaked out' that I first joined Toc H as a probationary

member in 1962. And when I agreed to become a voluntary presenter, Toc H was one of the subjects they suggested."

Sydney's tapes, which are distributed annually, are made up of music, comedy, sketches/plays, features, and occasionally interviews with celebrities. Charlie Chester, Sir Harry Secombe, Moira Kerr, Stanley Unwin and the Marquis of Bath are just a few of those who have been interviewed.

Sydney can be contacted at 3 General Higgins House, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3BJ.

Take a walk through London's history

The Great Fire of London took place in 1666 - and £1,666 is the sum of money Toc H is hoping to raise with its London Walk, which takes participants on a journey round the places destroyed by what Samuel Pepys called 'The malicious bloody flame.'

Each year Toc H holds a sponsored walk around the City of London, visiting a number of specially selected sites on a chosen theme. The Great Fire is the theme of this year's event which will be held on 4 September.

Walkers who want to walk for fun or for a different charity pay a £5 entrance fee. Others may get themselves sponsored for Toc H and are excused the entrance fee.

Last year almost £1,000 was raised for Toc H and about £700 for other

charities. Money raised this year will go to support projects organised by branches and project groups in London, the South East and East Anglia.

Entrants will be given a map and a list of questions relating to sites they are expected to visit on the walk. It begins and ends at the Museum of London and passes by Holborn Viaduct, London Bridge, the Monument, Pudding Lane, Bishopsgate and Cripplegate.

Application and sponsorship forms are available online at www.toch-lea Valley.org.uk. Follow the project links through to 'London Walk'. For further information contact Steve Smith, 4 Roydon Mill, Roydon, Essex CM19 5EJ, but please note that completed entry forms for the event must reach Steve by 30 June.



Photo: Mary Sullivan.
<http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm>

Point 3

Point 3 Editor is Sue Coffey who can be contacted c/o Toc H Central Services or email info@zymo.co.uk Tel: 01274 841402. The deadline for the next edition of Point 3 is Monday 17th May.

Will passes on his acting talents

TV actor Will Travis has worked with John Thaw, he's been a stalwart of a long-running popular TV series, he's a regular in many well-known TV programmes - but many young people know him better as the friendly face who teaches them drama at the local Toc H centre.

For Will, who played the character Dick Lampard in Granada's 'Where The Heart Is' for six years, has been going along to the Leigh Community Talbot Centre where 80 young people - with ages ranging from seven to 33 - enjoy drama classes.

Will says: "Rehearsing with the group is very enjoyable and people of all abilities are welcomed."

Will started acting in 1991, after studying at Salford College of Technology and the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. Although he enjoys television - he's also been in Casualty, The Bill, Between The Sheets and No Angels, to name but a few shows - he finds the challenge of live theatre much more rewarding.



Toc H in Leigh

Toc H has had a presence in Leigh since at least 1933. The present building was erected in 1979 by volunteers, and plays a large part in Toc H's work with the community.

In addition to the drama and dance groups, the centre is host to local football and cricket teams and a youth club. Siddow Common Football Club plays on a field opposite and uses the centre for changing, while Hope Carr Youth Club meets twice a week at the centre.

The groups which use the centre have met with much success and Toc H is looking to increase the use of the building even further.

That's just champion!

They're fleet-footed at the Talbot Centre at Leigh - Morris Dancing is a prize-winning business there.

Toc H member Lilian Collier, who has been involved with the award-winning Hope Carr Morris Group for 12 years, is enthusiastic about the teams' performances and proudly says: "During the past 12 years we have never come back from a competition without winning anything."

Among their many successes, Hope Carr teams have been Greater Manchester and Welsh champions. Ages range from 40 down to youngest member, three-year-old Hannah Hall. And they have the distinction of being the only female Morris Dancing group in Lancashire to be led by a man - 21-

year-old Lee Dodsworth, who has been dancing for ten years.

The dancers are always happy to entertain at Toc H events at the Talbot Centre. Lilian says: "Several groups use the centre, including ourselves, the drama group, young cricketers and young footballers. The Centre's activities are really building up again and we are really grateful for all the help and support we get from Toc H's Carol Tarvet and Francis Braganza."

Despite their success, the babies', tinies', junior and senior dance groups struggle financially, paying for costumes, travel to competitions etc. If anyone feels they can help with a donation, they are asked to contact Les Dodsworth on 01942 749060.

Good news stories

Several pieces of good news have emerged as Point 3 went to bed, and we'll be reporting on them in greater detail in the next issue.

In the meantime here's a taster ...

- The Lindridge Toc H residential centre in Devon has received planning permission for a development to provide a new residential block and improve access for the disabled to the centre. The development is also set to improve accommodation for the staff at the Centre.
- Approval has been given for two new staff posts to provide project and general management support, one in the North and one in the South.

Graham's life of giving

Walsall branch member Graham Stevenson has had a long and exciting life. He's had a tank shot from under him, and been hurt by machine-gun fire. But most of the blood he's lost has been through the 67 blood donations he's made, along with other local Toc H members he has recruited.

Graham has also managed to devote a large amount of time to helping others, as a volunteer. The Walsall Hospice Appeal, with which he is involved, asked him to share some of those volunteering experiences. He says:

"In the early 30s, as a child, I was involved with my family in the local carnivals. In those days carnivals were large affairs, and the money raised formed a substantial part of the funding of the hospitals.

Refugee

"I was involved in lots of charity work, particularly in 1937 when the Spanish Civil War was raging, collecting toys, clothing etc, for the Basque refugee children who were evacuated here.

"In 1938-39, being loosely attached to Toc H (I wasn't old enough to join, but my older brother was a member), I was involved in befriending the Jewish refugee children who managed to get here, but whose parents didn't - mostly perishing in Nazi death camps.

"Having trained in the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) through the Scouts, in the summer of 1939 I was part of a team that visited all the homes in the town issuing and fitting civilian respirators to all the inhabitants. In 1939 also, again through Toc H, I used to visit the patients at Goscote Sanatorium one evening a week. These were TB sufferers, all long-stay, whose families were unable to visit too often. We also maintained a lending library there.

"In May 1940, although only 15, I lied about my age, and became a local defence volunteer. The following year, again lying about my age, I volunteered for the Royal Armoured Corps.

Army

"I had a tank shot from under me before my 18th birthday out on the Western Desert. In 1944, in Normandy, I volunteered for a rather hazardous venture and was machine-gunned before I had taken a couple of steps. That abruptly ended my Army career."

Graham has made 67 blood donations and, with members of Toc H, also recruited several thousands of blood donors in the Walsall area. He also still maintains the Toc H Nature Trail for the Disabled on Cannock Chase.

Still going strong - in Bedfordshire

It's business as usual at the moment for the doughty band of regular volunteers who work at Kempston branch's charity shop - even though it is likely to close when the lease on the Williamson Road premises expires in three years' time.

And here are six of them - all Toc H members, who proudly admit to having a combined age of 460 years and a combined 90 years of service to the shop. They've all given their time to Kempston Venture, which runs the shop, since it was founded in 1988.

From the left, and in the sunshine outside instead of behind the counter, are Jack Turner (secretary) his wife Pat, who is chairman and responsible for the shop's day-to-day running; 90-year-old Amy Bellamy, Margaret Bodle, Maggie Wenham, and Ted Garner.



The proceeds from shop sales helped to fund an annual party for 115 people in February.

And apologies to this inspiring team for accidentally moving Kempston from Bedfordshire to London in the last edition of Point 3.

New members bring wealth of experience

Experience from several walks of life comes to Toc H in the latest influx of new members.

Mr David Ayriss, 67, of Broughton Astley, East Midlands, is a former engineering draftsman. An ex-Serviceman with the RAF, he is a long-serving secretary of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. Mr Ayriss also does volunteer work at the Leicester City General Hospital, helping the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, and he also enjoys being a scorer at Leicester County Cricket Club.

Mrs Gillian Norton, 77, of Gorleston on Sea, Norfolk, trained many years ago as a nurse and ended her working days as a Matron/manager

of a 35-bedded nursing home. She was a volunteer with the local Stroke Club and also a bereavement visitor. She is a member of her local church, and now looks forward to being with Toc H and helping in any way possible. Mrs Norton is a mother, grandmother and a great-grandmother.

Mr Patrick Thompson, 63, also of Gorleston on Sea, started out in the catering industry and worked as a manager for three J. Lyons & Co Corner House Restaurants in London. He also had a career in the police service, reaching the rank of inspector. Mr Thompson now works with a Patient and Public Involvement in Health Forum for the Great Yarmouth Primary Care Trust.

He is also chairman of The East of England Cleft Lip & Palate Forum, an organisation helping patients with cleft lip and palates, and is also a volunteer counsellor for people with HIV/AIDS. He is a Rotarian and is currently studying for a Masters Degree with the Open University in Health and Social Welfare.

Other new members are:

Paul Reynolds
South East

Pauline Reynolds
South East

Trevor Teague
West Midlands

Branch's proud history lives on at museum

The memory of Toc H Cheltenham Branch, founded in 1920 and recently closed, will live on thanks to a brief history written by member Eric Varley and presented to the local museum, where it will be kept safely in the archives.

Eric, who has held the posts of branch treasurer, secretary and chairman, tells how the present "Ceremony of Light" was first suggested by Cheltenham Branch when it was proposed in 1921 that they should "remember in silence for at least half a minute at each gathering old friends and comrades who had died in Flanders during the recent war".

A candle was lit for this half minute and the idea was rapidly taken up by other branches and the present "Lamp of Maintenance" was introduced in 1922.

Eric writes: "At a special Toc H birthday evening at the Guildhall in London on December 15th of that

year, when 2,000 members from all parts of the UK attended to witness the presentation by the Prince of Wales and lighting of the Lamp of 40 fledgling branches, Cheltenham was the first unit to be recognised outside London, and thus became the Senior Provincial Branch of Toc H."

In the early days Cheltenham Branch started a bureau to supply help for social work, and until the setting-up of the Social Services administration we have today, this was the main way in which Toc H served the community in Cheltenham.

Of the beginnings of the branch, Eric says: "Spurred on by the Rev Pat Leonard, then Padre of Cheltenham College, the branch began on November 11th 1920 with a memorable visit by Padre Phillip ('Tubby') Clayton. Beginning with a simple meal, meetings were held every fortnight at the Spinning Wheel Café, which was situated on the promenade. 'Tubby' was again a guest at the first birthday celebrations



Youngsters enjoy a visit to Cheltenham Museum

in 1921, which was attended by 'sixty good men and true', representing almost every military rank and civilian occupation."

For many years a men-only Toc H ran in Cheltenham alongside a Women's League of Helpers which later became the Toc H Women's Association. When the two organisations amalgamated nationally in 1971 Cheltenham's joint branch began in 1972 and carried on for three decades keeping faith in its belief that 'Service is the rent we pay for our room on earth.'

Branch members have been invited to join the Gloucestershire branch of Toc H, or can remain individual members.

Backing

Toc H is to become the sponsor of a second city academy. Following its ground-breaking decision to support an academy in Bradford, it will play a major part in forming a state-of-the-art Church of England academy in Camberwell, south London.

The school which will undergo transformation to academy is the Archbishop Michael Ramsey College, a 1,000-strong mixed, voluntary aided Church of England school.

Toc H Chief Executive Geoff Smith said: "As an organisation which has a commitment to education, we are pleased to have the opportunity to sponsor a second inner-city college. We look forward to playing a major part in the birth of the new Archbishop Ramsey Technology Academy and to foster the ethos of fellowship, community and caring which Toc H stands for."

• *Front cover shows a student entranced by a piece of work at a glass workshop*



Above: Principal Wendy Parmley joins the fun at the Lord Mayor's Parade when the school added to the spectacular carnival enjoyed by thousands



Making music for the Lord Mayor's Parade



Students on the



Students listen

g for second academy



Work in the greenhouses



The annual Ramsey lecture



The Head Girl meets the Princess Royal



the school leadership programme



A study in concentration



n intently to design guru Sir Terence Conran

Toc H goes for healthy growth

Toc H Director Geoff Smith is recovering from a serious fall. He writes:

Now I know what Adam must have felt like waking up in the Garden of Eden with sore ribs and a completely new perspective on the world. "Who are you?", he asked. "Well," she is reputed to have replied, "my name is Eve, and I'm new round here."

Of course I knew who Janet was. She was my wife, the same Janet she was before I fell down the stairs. But the pain in my ribs was probably much the same as the pain in Adam's. Plus ça change!

"I'll call an ambulance," she said. "No," I said, "I'll be fine in the morning." But I wasn't!

Thank you for the letters and cards, for your concern and for your support, it was much appreciated and I am now much improved, back on the road and hard at work trying to keep Toc H moving forward.

I constantly try to remind myself just what we have achieved over the past four years. It's a useful exercise in keeping what remains to be done in perspective.

If change has been the hallmark of my time as Director, if not my signature tune, then it is probably fair to say that for the next year the key word will be consolidation. Hopefully, following consolidation will come growth.

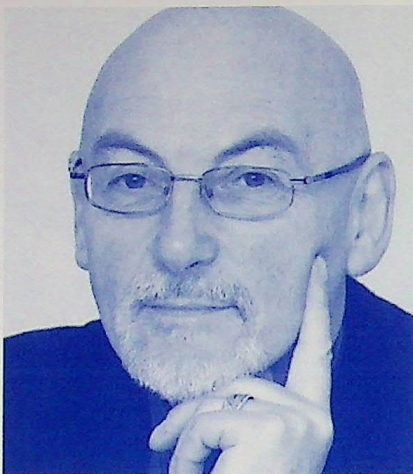
Four years ago almost to the day I write this piece, a friend of mine sent me a laminated card which proposed the following statement: Don't go for growth, go for health, because in the natural course of events a healthy thing will grow.

I hope that what we have created in Toc H is healthy. New projects, programmes, people, partnerships and places; closely monitored and managed finances; City Academies; international links; new governance arrangements.

Now we must ask, where will the new growth come?

The evidence suggests that it will come from branches, projects,

centres and academies. It will come because Toc H continues to be an active movement of people. It will come because we are still for people, projects and partnerships as this issue of Point 3 illustrates so clearly.



Toc H exists in local communities by:

- Offering an inclusive forum or network, sometimes called a branch or unit
- Providing a physical hub as a base for community action
- Supporting local participation and community leadership
- Accessing and providing local funding in support of local activity through initiatives, projects, services and academies

It offers project support in local communities through:

- Mentoring of vulnerable young people
- Supporting individuals
- Supporting families
- Supporting asylum seekers and refugees

It offers community retreats and spaces:

- Weirside in the Lake District
- Colsterdale in North Yorkshire
- Alison House in Derbyshire
- Adlington in Cheshire
- Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire
- Lindridge in Devon

Toc H is actively developing support

for the wider voluntary sector through consultancy and training and international links are becoming stronger and better developed.

We are working today, as we have been for 85 years, on building community, promoting citizenship and civil society, and enabling regeneration locally and nationally. As pathfinders we continue to lead the way, always quietly, in the background, eschewing the limelight, doing something useful every day and not getting found out.

As I write I have been particularly encouraged to hear news of Toc H branches renewing their outreach through new activity.

One branch is hoping to extend its hugely successful youth activities programme nationally, by challenging other regions to adopt its outreach work with disadvantaged young people using TalbotCentres as the activity base. Two volunteers with the group are offering their expertise to other Toc H branches who wish to form an outreach group. Contact is through the participation officer, Angela Gregory, at Central Services.

In the 1920's Toc H ran a "big brother" scheme. Today we call it youth mentoring and now the Winsford Toc H Youth Mentoring scheme is extending its work to include work with young people in custody, again a well-established Toc H tradition. Volunteers will offer friendship and support to the young people to assist the transition back into the community and support them as they pick up the pieces of their lives. The scheme is operated under a service level agreement with two young offenders' institutions.

In Milton Keynes volunteers from Barclays Bank have raised money and will be taking part in a canal boat project this summer, working with children with learning difficulties to have time out on the water. The project has been organised through Central Services and Peter Starmer, our account manager at Barclays.

• Continued on back page

Care leavers take a trip

Three young care leavers who have been helped by the Toc H Cheshire-based Mentoring Project were guests of Toc H at a three-day visit to Talbot House, Poperinge, last month.

Jenny Banks, Director of the inTOUCH programme, who accompanied them, said: "They

really got a lot out of the visit, which included a tour of the battlefield sites, and we were also able to relate this to the history of Toc H and what we do today."

The Belgian trip also included an induction for four new members of the mentoring staff, and was also attended by Development Officer

Chris Duncan who works on a drop-in scheme in Winsford, Cheshire, which has links to the Mentoring Project.

The Mentoring Project, which operates in London and in Cheshire, was officially launched at a ceremony at Lambeth Palace early this year in a ceremony attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Toc H staff enjoying a break during their training trip to Belgium are (from the left) Jenny Banks, Alison Lamb, Chris Duncan and Richard Copestick.

Just messing about...

The Grand Union Canal near Leighton Buzzard will be the setting of an exciting summer project run by Toc H in partnership with its bankers, Barclays.

A 70ft narrow boat, Roseanne, will take a total of 32 young people on a day adventure along the waterway where they will be introduced to the skills of opening and closing lock gates and also have the opportunity to learn about how and why the canal system was built, and to enjoy the nature of the areas through which the canal passes.

Sally Courtney, Toc H Finance Director, said: "Barclays are kindly

sponsoring this four-day event. Four groups of eight young people will go on each of the four days and we are sure they will all have a good time. Barclays staff will act as volunteers with a Toc H leader."



The idyllic setting of an inland waterway is part of the treat in store when Toc H takes groups of young people on day adventures along the Grand Union Canal this summer in a 70ft narrow boat, Roseanne.

Toc H mentoring goes inside prisons

The acclaimed Toc H project which provides a mentoring service for young care leavers and offenders is extending its reach in Cheshire - right inside two local prisons.

At the moment Toc H offers help from trained mentors to young people who are about to start looking after themselves, perhaps for the first time, following a move from a foster home, care or a custodial sentence.

The extension to the scheme, which has just begun in Cheshire, seeks to

take the help a stage further by getting to know the vulnerable young people who are about to be released.

Project co-ordinator Alison Lamb says: "Many of the young people are apprehensive of being outside, especially if they have been on their own for a long time. Even things such as noise and crowds can be a source of fear for them."

Toc H will link up with other agencies, including the prison authorities'

resettlement and education teams, to ensure a support service is in place to help people leaving the prison. An initial visit will be followed by a second "one-to-one" meeting by a mentor and young person on a visiting day.

Stoke Heath prison and Thorn Cross open prison, Warrington, are taking part in the scheme which will pair up a prisoner with a mentor at a critical time before release. Although the scheme is in its infancy, there has already been one referral to it from Thorn Cross.

Gwen is still caring for others - even at 102

A woman who went to work at Talbot House in London when she was 20 has just celebrated her 102nd birthday. Gwen Sellars says one of her fondest memories of that time was when Queen Mary visited the refuge.

Gwen, who was born in Dublin in 1902, lives at Kinver Grange retirement home in Dursley, Gloucestershire, where her birthday was celebrated with friends and staff, who praised her for her commitment to caring for others.

By the time she was 14, her stepfather had died and she had

nursed her dying mother. After the First World War she went to train as a nurse but had to resign because of poor health and it was while working as a nanny that she was told about the work of Toc H and went to work at the London refuge.

In 1935 she qualified as a midwife, and later as a health visitor, and during the Second World War she worked in London clinics.

Gwen's friends have praised her caring nature, saying that even at 102 she can often be found helping someone in need.

Obituaries

Norah Bishop
Swindon & Wroughton

James W Bush
New East Mids District

Paul Cleminson
East Midlands

Philip S Day
South East

Ruby Denham
London District Branch

William John Pashley
North Walsham

Megan E Reed
South East

Edward H Weal
South Devon Branch

William Webley
Graeme

Jane H Wilkinson
Orston

John Wilson
Great Harwood (M)

Doris Wright
East of England

Can you help Cymru Toc H library?

Donations of videos, CDs or DVDs for the patient Library service will all be gratefully received - apart from 18 certificate films. For further details please contact Lyn Edwards, Development Officer, Toc H Cymru

Library Service;
Email:-
toch@cymrudev.charitydays.co.uk
Tel :-01352720922
Mobile:- 07966900225

Volunteer Liam earns Archbishop's praise

Catering student Liam Smith has been thanked personally by the Archbishop of Canterbury for his caring work as a Toc H volunteer with the Cheshire mentoring service.

When 22-year-old Liam is not studying at West Cheshire College, Chester, he gives up his spare time helping young people with difficult backgrounds.

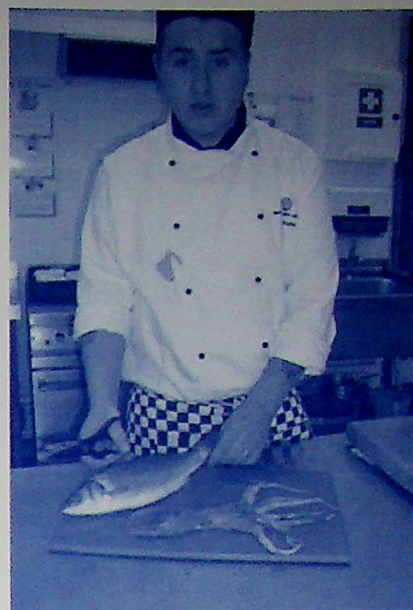
He met the Archbishop, Dr Rowan Williams, at Lambeth Palace at the official launch of Toc H's mentoring work. Liam, who lives in Frodsham, said: "It was a real honour to meet him as it demonstrates my voluntary work is really appreciated. We had a good chat about our experiences

with Toc H, our support for the organisation and also my interest in cookery and work at the college."

Liam is putting his catering skills to good use by producing a recipe book including advice on healthy eating for young people who may have just left care and are getting used to living independently.

He says: "I hope it will be a help to people who are trying to adjust to living independently, people who are trying to adjust in difficult circumstances."

More praise for Liam came from his college tutor Julie Hinde, who says that using his knowledge to help



A tasty meal - catering student Liam Smith at work at West Cheshire College, Chester.

others in the community is a wonderful example to other young people.

City's faith in caring communities

John Battle, the Prime Minister's informal adviser on faith communities, has described Bradford as "one of the most caring places in the country".

People from many different faiths came together in a 'Faith in our

Future' meeting in the city to spotlight the major contributions being made by faith groups to community cohesion across the districts.

Among representatives from many religious groups - including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus - who spoke at the packed event at Bradford University was Manoj Joshi, a member of the Toc H National Management Committee. He welcomed the positive message of co-operation and caring which other speakers had demonstrated by both their words and actions.

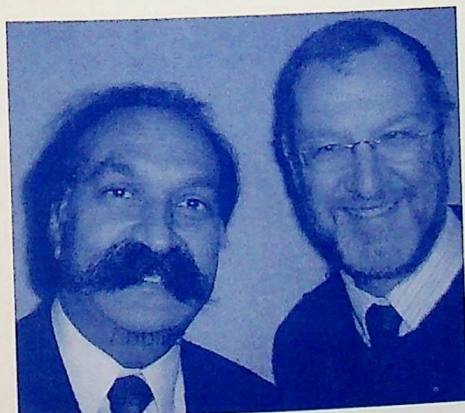
Bradford-born John Battle, MP for Leeds West and a former Foreign Office Minister, said: "Bradford is a very special place and I will be taking back to the Prime Minister and the Government a very positive report about the

remarkable work being done here. The hard work and dedication has made Bradford into one of the most caring places in the country."

He said there was a willingness to work together and people could depend on the various faith communities to be there for them.

Various community-help projects reported to the meeting included a Sunday morning 'homework workshop' run by the local Sikh community, a lunch club for elderly people from different communities at a Hindu Temple, a project to help young Muslims with their learning, and a centre for young people run by a local Christian church.

The event was part of Bradford Vision's efforts to put the spotlight on the major contributions being made by faith groups to community cohesion across the district.



John Battle, MP, the Prime Minister's informal adviser on faith communities, and Manoj Joshi, a member of the Toc H National Management Committee, at the Bradford "Faith in our Future" event.

Life, Toc H, the universe and all that stuff!

Sir Roger Jackling, Director of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, is a member of the Toc H National Management Council. Here he shares some of his views about Toc H and his hopes for the future of the charity.

The Academy brings together the Royal College of Defence Studies, the Joint Services Command and Staff College, and the Royal Military College of Science providing military and civilian personnel with high-quality training and education. Sir Roger became its first Director in 2002 after a distinguished career with the Ministry of Defence, involving planning for both the Zimbabwe Independence process and the Falklands conflict. He became a Deputy Under Secretary in 1991 and in 1996 was promoted to Second Permanent Under Secretary of State.

What do you hope you may be able to achieve for Toc H?

I hope that my experience of public sector management will help Geoff Smith and his team plan and pursue Toc H future development.

How did you come to join Toc H and when?

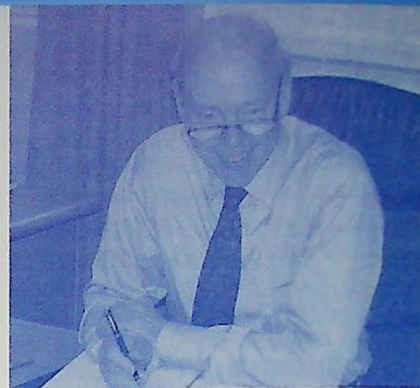
I joined last year after meeting Geoff and hearing about the new directions the charity was taking. These seemed to me both exciting and consistent with the strong traditions of the movement.

How will your position as Director of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom fit in with your Toc H role?

My background in the Ministry of Defence, and working with the Armed Forces, gives me an affinity with the Toc H story and tradition. My current job involves me with the higher and further education sector, which I hope will help particularly with the Toc H educational activity, city academies, etc.

What would you say to encourage others to support Toc H?

More than ever, there is a need for communities to develop their sense of identity and their capacity for local action. Toc H can make a strong contribution on that front through its volunteers and the major projects



where it is a partner or sponsor. The more committed members who join, the more Toc H can achieve.

What are your interests outside your occupation and Toc H?

My family, music and theatre, history and philosophy, playing golf and following Kent County Cricket and Tottenham Hotspur.

What are your main hopes for the future of Toc H?

I hope Toc H will develop successfully along the lines currently envisaged, that it will greatly expand its membership, and be an effective catalyst for action in communities which manifest the Toc H values in a very practical way.

Toc H goes for healthy growth

• from Page 8

Two letters arrived following our mailing asking members to pledge a minimum of £2 per month in support of Toc H. One from an older member praised the current leadership from staff and the NMC, which is finally putting Toc H back on track and enclosed his pledge, duly gift aided. The other came from the secretary of the Toc H Didsbury Rugby Football Club, offering to support a Toc H project and inviting us to renew the relationship which started with the Manchester "mark*" way back when.

Each of these contacts is extremely encouraging, and having fielded more than our fair share of brickbats, it is nice to receive the occasional bouquet.

Today Citizenship and Civil Society are high on the Government's agenda as they are on the Toc H

agenda, and I want this to be realised because we need financial support if we are to continue. Our annual spending budget will soon be £1.5million, and we cannot raise that money from flag days alone.

So we look for support from Government, from major trusts and corporate sponsors to match the generosity of individual members. We aim to generate income, we have a fundraising strategy, and we remain positive, cautiously optimistic that the "good thing thus begun" will continue, going from strength to strength.

Our fundraising adviser says that if you want to raise £1million you either need one person to give you £1million, or a million people to give you a £1. Either way we continue to rely on our membership and our

friends to encourage us. The general response to the membership appeal has been extremely positive and we are grateful for each and every individual expression of support as together we take Toc H forward.

The doors of Everyman's Club are still open and the sign, freshly painted, carries the same message, 1915 - ?

Geoffrey Smith
April 2004

* For newer members, the marks were originally hostels for young men run by Toc H to provide friendship and support before Branches were created